

Sunday 22nd May 2022

Welcome

Call to Worship “The Lord is my light and my salvation;
I will fear no one.
The Lord protects me from all danger
I will never be afraid.” - Psalm 27

Hymn 63

All people that on Earth do Dwell (old 100th)

All people that on earth do dwell
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice
Him serve with mirth His praise forth tell
Come ye before Him and rejoice

Know that the Lord is God indeed
Without our aid He did us make
We are His folk He doth us feed
And for His sheep He doth us take

O enter then His gates with praise
Approach with joy His courts unto
Praise laud and bless His name always
For it is seemly so to do

For why the Lord our God is good
His mercy is forever sure
His truth at all times firmly stood
And shall from age to age endure.

Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Lord our God, You are so strong and so powerful.
It is to You whom we turn to whenever we are in trouble or distress.
We call out to You - You listen to us and You answer us.
We ask for Your help and You graciously give it.

You are always ready to listen to us Lord,
for we are part of Your family.
You delight in our conversations together.

Help us Father, to delight in You, in Your Son Jesus
and in Your Holy Spirit.
Help us Lord, to appreciate You for Who You are.
Enable us to join with You in Your work, whatever that might be.
And equip us for the tasks You will set us.

Forgive us Lord, for our lack of faith and trust.
For only coming to You when all else has failed.
Help us to learn to bring all things to You in the first place
Knowing that You are always ready to advise and help us.

Thank You for the forgiveness

which You have made possible through the cross.
We gratefully receive Your forgiveness
And give thanks for all that Jesus has done for us.

Help us Lord, to develop a deeper understanding of You.
To get to know You better.
Let us enjoy our times of fellowship and togetherness
As we worship, listen and pray together this day.

Build us up as a family of Your people here in the Borders.
Help us to support one another practically and spiritually.
Bring to our minds those we should visit or 'phone or pray for.

Receive now our offerings with thanks and use them as You see fit.

And hear us now Lord as we join together in the prayer
taught to us by Your Son:

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name
Your Kingdom come, Your will be done
On Earth as in Heaven
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours
Now and forever. Amen.

Old Testament Reading - Isaiah 60 v1-3 and v19-22 (GNB) - Ruth Scott

The Future Glory of Jerusalem

60 Arise, Jerusalem, and shine like the sun;
The glory of the LORD is shining on you!
² Other nations will be covered by darkness,
But on you the light of the LORD will shine;
The brightness of his presence will be with you.
³ Nations will be drawn to your light,
And kings to the dawning of your new day.

¹⁹ "No longer will the sun be your light by day
Or the moon be your light by night;
I, the LORD, will be your eternal light;
The light of my glory will shine on you.
²⁰ Your days of grief will come to an end.
I, the LORD, will be your eternal light,
More lasting than the sun and moon.
²¹ Your people will all do what is right,
And will possess the land forever.
I planted them, I made them,
To reveal my greatness to all.
²² Even your smallest and humblest family
Will become as great as a powerful nation.

When the right time comes,
I will make this happen quickly.
I am the LORD!”

Hymn 528-
Make me a Channel of your Peace

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury your pardon Lord
And where there's doubt true faith in you

*Oh Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy
O Master grant . . .

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

Prayer - (Alison Blackadder Etrick and Yarrow)

Father God, we come before you now and we praise you for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us this week. We praise you for your creation and for the natural world that surrounds us. We thank you that you always watch over us and you know our every need - and we thank you for our family and friends.

Father, we come before you now with our prayers for others.

We continue to pray for the country of Ukraine. We pray for the Ukrainian soldiers who are still trapped in Mariupol. We pray that you will draw close to them and calm their fears and we pray that they may soon be brought to safety. Lord, we pray for their families who are worrying about them during this time – we ask that you will bring them your comfort and peace.

Lord God, we pray for the families who lost loved ones during the shooting in Buffalo last week. We pray that you will comfort those who are mourning and those who are suffering from shock. We pray that you will draw close to the whole community while they try to support each other in their grief. And Father, we pray against those who have hatred in their hearts towards others simply because of the colour of their skin – change their hearts Lord we pray.

Lord we pray for our Church of Scotland's General Assembly as it meets this week. We pray for all those who will attend that they will listen to your guidance in the decisions that they will make for your church. We pray that Jesus will be honoured and glorified and given His place as head of our church.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those within our communities who are worried about the rising cost of living – people who are struggling to feed their families. We pray for those who are having to skip meals and for those who don't have enough money to cover the rising energy prices. Help them Lord and help us to be mindful of what we can do to help. We give thanks for all the Food Banks that help those in need and for those who volunteer.

We pray for the OPEN DOOR café in Selkirk Church – we pray for all the helpers – bless them Lord for the time they give and for their dedication towards the running of the café and towards the people who come along.

We pray for all those who are preparing and planning for the summer café in Bannerfield and we pray that you will prompt us and encourage us to offer our help towards this important programme.

Father, we thank you that you will be with us throughout the coming week. Help us Lord to show kindness and thoughtfulness to those whom you will bring us in to contact with. Help us to grow in our faith – as church families and as individuals. Lord, help us to become more like Jesus day by day.

For we bring all our prayers before you in His name, Amen

Hymn 542

Lord Speak to me that I may speak - omit v5 (tune - Warrington 470)

Lord speak to me that I may speak
in living echoes of thy tone
As thou hast sought so let me seek
thy erring children lost and lone

O lead me Lord that I may lead
the wandering and the wavering feet
O feed me Lord that I may feed
thy hungering ones with manna sweet

O strengthen me that while I stand
firm on the rock and strong in thee
I may stretch out a loving hand
to wrestlers with the troubled sea

O teach me Lord that I may teach
the precious things thou dost impart

And wing my words that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart

O fill me with thy fullness Lord
until my very heart o'erflows
In kindling thought and glowing word
thy love to tell thy praise to show

O use me Lord use even me
just as thou wilt and when and where

Until thy blessed face O see
thy rest thy joy thy glory share.

Bible Teaching

Matthew 5 v14-16 (NIV) –

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

You are the light of the world - so let your light shine - don't hide it under a bucket!”

It was Jesus who said: “I am the Light of the world!”

But here in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is addressing you and me, His followers.
Jesus says to us: “YOU are the light of the world!”

How do we react to this?

How did those who first heard these words as part of The Sermon on the Mount react?

They would have heard something similar before. The Jewish people spoke of Jerusalem as “a light for the whole world”

One of their famous Rabbis or Teachers was once called “a lamp of Israel.”

But there is one particular thing about this expression which is especially interesting.

The Jewish people knew that:
NO-ONE LIT THEIR OWN LIGHT!

Remember that in those days the people used oil lamps with a wick.
They had to be lit with a flame.

Jerusalem may have been ‘a light to the nations’ - but it was **GOD WHO LIT THE LAMP!**

So what does that mean for you and me as Christians today?

When we hear Jesus command us to be lights for the world?

It means that we do not produce **OUR OWN LIGHTS** - instead we must shine with the reflection of the **LIGHT OF CHRIST!**

In other words it is **CHRIST IN US,**
(**THE HOLY SPIRIT**) who must shine out **THROUGH US** in all our dealings with others in this world!

We **CANNOT** be lights for the world if Christ is not in us!

We need to have **HIS SPIRIT** living in us
in order for **HIS LIGHT** to be seen!

And Jesus tells us that we must **NOT PREVENT** His light from shining out.

We must NOT COVER UP His light.

We must ALLOW His light to shine out from us in all we do, say and think!

A light must be seen!

In Israel the houses were very dark, with only one little circular window about 18 inches in diameter.

The lamp was a bit like a gravy-boat, filled with oil, with a wick floating in it.

There were no matches - you had to spark a flint in order to light it - it was not easy!

Once you had managed to light the lamp, you would place it high up on a stand (which was usually just a roughly shaped branch of wood) so that it would light up the whole room.

When the occupants wanted to leave the house, they would take the lamp down from its stand and put it under an upturned bowl (or bushel).

This kept the lamp burning safely until they returned - a bit like when you put the fire-guard in front of the coal fire to keep things safe.

A light must be seen!

It must be PROMINENT, like a city built on the top of a hill for all around to see.

If Jesus commands us to be lights for the world then HIS LIGHT,
HIS INVOLVEMENT IN OUR LIVES
must be seen in everything we do!

It must be seen in the way we speak with the person on the checkout at the supermarket.

It must be seen in our interaction with the waiter or waitress in the restaurant.

It must be seen in the way we react to our boss at work and with those we supervise in our workplace.

It must be seen in the way we play a round of golf or a game of bowls.

It must be seen in our conversations with others on the 'phone or when replying to a difficult email.

It must be seen in the way we drive our cars, or park them.

Professor William Barclay writes:

A Christian should be just as much a Christian in the factory, the workshop, the shipyard, the mine, the schoolroom, the surgery, the kitchen, the golf course and the playing field, as he or she is in church.

“Let your light shine before others”
says Jesus, don't hide your light under a
bucket!

People should come to see that we are followers of Jesus by the way we live our lives.

By the things we do and say.

By the way we think. By the way we relate to others, by the way we react towards them, by the way we treat them.

Jesus said : “THIS is how everyone will recognise that you are My disciples - when they see the LOVE you have for each other!”

And it’s not only to our fellow Christians that we must show our love - it is to everyone!

Jesus proclaimed that we should love our neighbour as much as we love ourselves.

“But who is my neighbour?” someone asked (expecting Jesus to feel off a short list.)

Instead, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, to show that EVERYONE is our neighbour!

As Christians, Jesus expects us to show love, kindness, consideration and respect
TO EVERYONE!

To those close to us, to those far away,
to those whom we like, to those whom we don’t, to those who are good to us and to those who are out to do us harm -
TO EVERYONE!

But that is easier said than done!

Sometimes it’s just so easy for us to HIDE OUR LIGHTS and NOT to let them shine!

Let’s look together this morning at some of the ways in which you and I fail to
LET OUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS

FIRST OF ALL, we fail to let our light shine when:

WE ARE SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER.

When there is an opportunity for us to say that something is not right (at work or in the family, or at church or in our community).

We must TAKE THAT OPPORTUNITY and speak up.

On 2nd July 2005, myself and some members of the family joined 225,000 others to form a human chain around the city of Edinburgh on the Make Poverty History March (some of you may have been there too).

It was an incredibly moving day!

Here’s the tee-shirt I bought that day,

1. I still wear it. There is a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King on the front:
2. “OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER!”
3. “Don’t stay silent” says Jesus.
4. “Don’t hide your light under a bucket.”
5. “LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!”
6. Speak up, speak up, speak up against injustice, against unfairness, against persecution, against poverty, against discrimination.
7. The next time you have the opportunity to speak up for someone, to speak out against something, to stand up for what is right and good, to stand up for Jesus -

- THEN DO SO!

It's so much EASIER to stay silent!

It's much SAFER to keep our mouths shut

It's much LESS EMBARRASSING to say nothing.

BUT ITS NOT WHAT JESUS WANTS US TO DO!

“Don't HIDE your light” He says.

“Let your light SHINE!!”

SECONDLY, we fail to let our light shine when:

WE GO ALONG WITH THE CROWD

“DON'T go along with the crowd”
says Jesus, “DON'T swim with the tide -

- GO AGAINST THE FLOW!”

You will have seen the Christian symbol 'Ichthus', which is a fish.

There's a great poster of a large group of fish all swimming in the one direction, with the Christian (Ichthus) fish all on its own, swimming in the opposite direction!

'Don't go with the flow - go against it!'

Once again it's just so easy for us to 'go with the flow.' To say to ourselves:
“Well everyone else is doing it.”

We don't like to be different, we don't like to stand out. It's less hassle to go with it, we want to be accepted, to be 'one of the boys or girls.'

But there are times in our lives as Christians when we NEED to go against the flow.

When we NEED to swim against the tide.
When we NEED to go CHRIST'S WAY
and NOT the way of the world!

Our young people in particular find it very hard to 'go against the flow.'

They want to be 'in' and not 'out.'
I suppose we were much the same when we were younger.

But there is so much more pressure on our young people today, through social media - pressure to conform and to live up to what others are saying & doing.

They can be ostracised by their friends
for not joining in.

If we want to literally swim against the tide, we need to make a big PHYSICAL EFFORT.

And we need to make a big SPIRITUAL EFFORT if we want to go against the ways of the world which are contradictory to the ways of Jesus!

Pope Francis has said that: "We must have the courage to go against the tide of current values that do not conform to the path of Jesus!"

And J.B. Phillips translates Romans 12 v2

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould - but let God re-mould your minds from within!"

As Christians, we are constantly under pressure from the world around us - increasing pressure to accept things which, as Christians, we do not believe are right.

Now, we can either GIVE IN to those pressures (and let the world squeeze us into its own mould.)

Or, we can RESIST those pressures and allow God to go on changing us from within - remoulding us into the likeness of His Son.

As the hymn writer puts it:

"Finish then Thy new creation:
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee,

Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise!"

There are times when, as Christians,
we come into conflict with the world,
with society, with our communities,
with our families and, at times, even with our church.

But Jesus encourages us at these times:
Jesus says:

"Count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out
or tell lies about you to discredit Me.

What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable.

You can be glad when that happens - give a cheer even! - for though they don't like it, I do! And all Heaven applauds.

And know that you are in good company.

My prophets and witnesses have gone through the same."

AND THIRDLY: We fail to let our light shine when:

WE DO NOT HELP OTHERS

As Christians we are called by Jesus to help those around us - our neighbours.

And we've seen that EVERYONE is our neighbour, whether they live next door or thousands of miles away.

Our neighbour, Jesus reminds us, is anyone who needs help.

We need to look BEYOND our own selves.

We need to look at those around us.

Audrey Hepburn was described by many as one of our most beautiful actresses.

But this is what she said about real beauty:

“For beautiful eyes - look for the good in others.

For beautiful lips - speak only words of kindness.

And for poise - walk with the knowledge that you are never alone.”

We need to show others that we care about them. That THEIR worries and concerns are OUR worries and concerns.

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt once said:

“People don’t care how much you KNOW

- Until they know how much you CARE!”

We need to show how MUCH we care about others by reaching out a helping hand to them when they need it.

Someone once said:

“As you grow older you will discover that you have two hands - one for helping yourself - and one for helping others!”

How can we show those around us that God loves them, that God cares about them, that God thinks they are wonderful?

By showing them that WE love them,
that WE care about them,
that WE think they are wonderful.

By helping them when they need it!
By RECOGNISING what their need is.
And by MEETING that need!

The apostle James writes:

“If you come across an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say:
‘Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!’

and then walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup - where does that get you?

Isn’t it obvious that God-talk without
God-acts is outrageous nonsense?”

When faced with someone in need, we must ask ourselves:

“If JESUS was here, what would HE do,
what would HE say to this person,
how would HE help them?”

And then WE DO and SAY and HELP just as He would have.

THAT'S how we let our light shine out!
THAT'S how we let others know that God loves them.

“Don't hide your light” says Jesus
“Let it shine for all to see...
SO THAT THEY WILL PRAISE YOUR
FATHER IN HEAVEN!”

Hymn 543
Longing for Light

Longing for light we wait in darkness
Longing for truth we turn to you
Make us your own your holy people
Light for the world to see

Christ be our light shine in our heart
Shine through the darkness
Christ be our light shine in your church gathered today

Longing for peace our world is troubled
Longing for hope many despair
Your word alone has power to save us
Make us your living voice
Christ be our light . . .

Longing for food many are hungry
Longing for water many still thirst
Make us your bread broken for others
Shared until all are fed
Christ be our light . . .

Longing for shelter many are homeless Longing for warmth many are cold
Make us your building sheltering others
Wall made of living stone
Christ be our light . . .

Many the gifts many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong
Let us be servants to one another
Making your kingdom come
Christ be our light . . .

Benediction - ‘And now may
the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all, now and forevermore.’

(3 fold Amen)